

CLAIMS

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1. A latching apparatus comprising:

5 a post member defining,
 an elongated axis,
 an elongated, laterally extending latching
 surface defined at an outer radius from
 said axis, and
 an elongated, laterally extending
10 releasing surface defined at an inner
 radius from said axis, wherein said
 outer radius is greater than said inner
 radius;

15 a latching assembly defining a passage for
 receiving said post member and including a
 grip means extending at least partially into
 said passage for,
 effecting a grip between said post member
 and said latching assembly when said
 grip means engages said latching
20 surface, and
 releasing said grip between said post
 member and said latching assembly when
 said grip means engages said releasing
 surface; and

25 a moving means for,
 moving said latching surface into
 engagement with said grip means,
 whereby said grip is effected between
 said post member and said latching
 assembly, and
 moving said releasing surface into
 engagement with said grip means,
 whereby said grip is released between
 said post member and said latching

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assembly.

2. ~~Apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said releasing surface defines a smooth surface.~~

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3. Apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said latching surface defines a notched surface.

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4. Apparatus of Claim 3, wherein said notched surface includes, at least, a plurality of teeth.

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5. Apparatus of Claim 1,
wherein said grip means includes, at least, a ball, and

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wherein said latching means further comprises,
an inner shell defining said passage and
further defining a radial opening in
said inner shell, wherein said ball is
located in and radially movable within
said radial opening,

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an outer shell positioned outside said
inner shell, wherein said inner shell
is axially slid able in a first
direction and a second direction with
respect to said outer shell, said outer
shell including, at least, a tapered
portion defining a tapered inner
surface adjacent to said ball, and
a biasing means for biasing said inner

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shell axially in said first direction
such that said ball is biased into
engagement with said tapered inner
surface, whereby said ball is biasly
urged radially inwardly into said
passage, wherein said biasing means

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accommodates movement of said inner shell in said second direction to accommodate radial movement of said ball out of said passage.

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B?*

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C'*